



# National Association of Conservation Districts

## **Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service**

### **Grant Programs that Support Small Farm Work**

#### **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program**

[www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/bfrdp.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/bfrdp.html)

The 2008 Farm Bill made available \$18 million in FY09 to fund a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) through a competitive grants process administered by CSREES. The BFRDP program will support the nation's beginning farmers and ranchers through competitive grants to fund new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives that address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers. Priority will be given to projects that are partnerships and collaborations led by or including nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach. Project periods will be limited to 3 years. Proposed budget requests must not exceed \$250,000 per year.

#### **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR): Small and Mid-Size Farms**

[www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fnum=1440](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fnum=1440)

One of 12 topic areas in the USDA SBIR program, the Small and Mid-Size Farms area aims to promote and improve the sustainability and profitability of small and mid-size farms and ranches (where annual sales of agricultural products are less than \$250,000 for small farms and \$500,000 for mid-size farms). The primary focus of the SBIR Small and Mid-Sized Farms program is on the development of new technologies and information that will help improve the viability and profitability of small and mid-size farms and ranches. Emphasis is placed on 1) developing new agricultural enterprises that are focused on specialty farm products, both plant and animal, and how to market these products, 2) development of new management tools to enhance the efficiency and profitability of small farms, 3) development of farming methods appropriately scaled to small farms that are directed at more efficient use of natural resources, and 4) development of new educational tools to ensure that small farmers have the information they need to operate their farms on a sustainable and profitable basis. Small Businesses are eligible to apply.

#### **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE)**

[www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fnum=1130](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fnum=1130)

SARE works to increase knowledge about - and help farmers and ranchers adopt - practices that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities. Several types of competitive grants are awarded by four regional administrative councils. Research and education grants, generally ranging from \$60,000 to \$150,000, fund projects that usually involve scientists, producers and others in an interdisciplinary approach. Professional development grants, ranging from \$20,000 to \$90,000, offer educational opportunities for extension, NRCS, and other agricultural professionals. Producer grants, typically between \$1,000 and \$15,000, go to farmers and ranchers who test innovative ideas and share the results with their neighbors. Projects address crop and livestock production and marketing, stewardship of soil and other natural resources, economics and quality of life. Application details, deadlines, and percent success vary by region and program.

#### **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) – Agricultural Prosperity for Small and Medium-Sized Farms**

[www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/rfas/afri\\_rfa.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/rfas/afri_rfa.html)

The purpose of this program is to foster interdisciplinary studies to improve understanding of the interactions between the economic and environmental components important to the long-term viability, competitiveness and efficiency of small and medium-sized farms (including social, biological and other components, if necessary). While small and medium-sized farms account for less than 25 percent of the value of all agricultural products sold in the U.S., the long-term viability of these farms is critical to the prosperity of rural people and places as these farms account for approximately 92 percent of all farms in the U.S. Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire Request for Applications for current priorities and additional information relative to the programs of interest. This program accepts a wide range of applications; carefully review the budget guidelines to ensure application acceptance.

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509 Capitol Court, NE, Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 547-6223 Fax: (202) 547-6450

[www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org)

## **Regional Risk Management Education Centers**

[www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/economics/in\\_focus/farm\\_if\\_risk.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/economics/in_focus/farm_if_risk.html)

The objective of this program is to educate agricultural producers on the full range of risk management strategies and tactics, including futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction, and other risk management strategies. There are four regional Risk Management Education Centers that are supported by the Digital Risk Management Center at the University of Minnesota. The four Risk Management Education Centers provide funds on a competitive basis to those who have the expertise to develop and deliver risk mitigation educational materials to producers. Any private or public entity that can show it can prepare highly professional educational programs for producers on risk management is eligible to apply.

## **Additional Resources that Support Small Farms**

### USDA Service Center Locations

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

### State Links

[www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/partners.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/partners.html) Provides a hotlink to all universities in the state, usually with links to local offices. By choosing "Extension", one can get all available online publications and updates about local training.

### USDA Sustainable Agriculture Program

[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org) Site includes free bulletins and online books serving limited resource farmers and Spanish materials. Events and training are also posted.

Example: Living on the Land: Teaching small acreage owners to conserve their natural resources - curriculum and training at <http://wsare.usu.edu/pro/pr2003/EW99-003.pdf>

### Spanish extension materials

<http://extensionespanol.net>

### Garden links with online videos, frequently asked questions

<http://webgarden.osu.edu>

### New E-Extension online curricula currently available for horse management, wildlife damage, fire ants

[www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org)

### Extension Disaster Education Network—online publications for emergencies: bird flu, flood, drought, forest fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, West Nile virus

[www.eden.lsu.edu](http://www.eden.lsu.edu)

## **Curricula**

Training and certification is available in various states for Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Master environmental specialists to train volunteers.

Living on the Land—a curricula subdivided into modules that is available from state extension services—e.g., University of Idaho Small Ranch Manual, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, University of Montana Cooperative Extension, Washington State University Extension Service, Western SARE.

## **GETTING YOUR DISTRICTS INVOLVED**

- ✓ Visit with your State Extension Director about CSREES resources for small farm/acreage assistance.
- ✓ Encourage districts to work with their local Extension office on using and developing needed resources and tools.
- ✓ Encourage district employees to seek training and certification provided by CSREES.
- ✓ Refer to the CSREES webpage ([www.csrees.usda.gov](http://www.csrees.usda.gov)) for information about appropriate grant opportunities.